Royal Flying Doctor Service
SOUTH EASTERN SECTION

The South Eastern Flyer

Your update on how your kindness continues to deliver critical healthcare to families in the bush.

ISSUE 4, 2025

Jane provides counselling services to people like her in Broken Hill and other remote communities.

Now Jane is working as a lived experience counsellor giving back to others, thanks to your support.

You gave Jane strength, so she can give back to others

Jane has overcome mental health challenges and was inspired to become a Mental Health clinician, supporting other families in the bush. This new career was made possible by the life-changing experience of counselling support that you made possible.

Jane began to struggle with her mental health after her youngest son left for boarding school.

She felt very isolated, living hundreds of kilometres from family and close friends on remote Tandou Station. At first, she suffered in silence.

However, after realising she needed help, Jane went to her GP, who referred her to one of our mental health clinicians, Glynis Thorp. With Glynis's support, *"everything changed."* Jane became interested in supporting other women like her and took an 'Accidental Counselling' course. It was the start of what Jane calls a 'reinvention.' She studied clinical hypnotherapy, psychotherapy, and mental health first aid training, and is now completing more counselling studies.

"I thought, this is something I would love to do, to help other people, because I understand. Knowing there's someone to help you get through a hard time, like drought and isolation, it's so important. Now I help run the type of clinic that helped me."

Jane says our community loves the dedicated mental health clinic days.

"When you arrive, when the aircraft lands, they're just so excited and thankful to have us there. A lot of them do morning tea for us. There are formal and informal conversations. It's great for people to say they've had a rough week… to get it out rather than store it inside."

From her own struggle and recovery, Jane has become a champion for mental health, with a whole new purpose and drive to help others. She's incredibly proud to be giving back to her community and she's so thankful for your support.

Jane's experience with isolation is not unusual for people in the bush, and it is why your continued generosity is so incredibly important. Thank you for caring so much.

It was a phone call that saved her life — thanks to you

Your caring support makes it easier for people in the outback to get regular GP check-ups that are so important in providing vital care. Just take it from Marie, who wouldn't be here without you.

After surgery and treatment for bowel cancer, Marie says she feels so fortunate that her community has Flying Doctor clinics. *"The service is really good. When they picked up something was wrong, they put my scan through as urgent, which was lucky, because the cancer was right through me."*

Marie knew something wasn't quite right with her health.

But for people who live in the bush, like Marie, it's not always easy to get a medical opinion. Living in the tiny town of Angeldool, 45 kilometres from Lightning Ridge with a population of just 58 people, Marie's nearest major hospital is in Dubbo, hundreds of kilometres away.

Then one day, Marie received an email about our clinic visits in nearby Hebel. *"The email said the Flying Doctor would be at Hebel every second Tuesday, so I rang up and made an appointment."*

The phone call saved her life.

"Doctor Paul Lunney at the clinic sent me off for blood tests, then got paperwork organised and pushed for an urgent colonoscopy. He followed through. There would have been a 30–60-day wait otherwise. Eight days later, I was in surgery."

Marie's health is now regularly monitored, and she attends the Hebel clinic fortnightly for check-ins with Nurse Abbey.

"I never thought I would use the Flying Doctor. Never in a million years. You never know when you're going to use it," Marie said.

Thank you for your life-saving commitment to providing clinic visits for rural, regional and remote communities. With your support, people like Marie can get the urgent care they need.

Marie got the immediate treatment she needed following a visit to the Hebel clinic. Because of you, she now has more quality time with her grandkids like Hayden (pictured).

Willow and his family want to say thank you

Naomi and James have always loved exploring Australia with their young boys - but their experience when baby Willow struggled to breathe on a camping trip made them realise the importance of life-saving care no matter where you are in Australia.

Camping at Menindee Lakes, 115 kilometres from Broken Hill, was an exciting adventure for the whole family, including three-month-old Willow. But not long into the trip, little Willow began having difficulty breathing.

"Willow became lethargic and was really working to breathe," said Naomi. *"There had been a pollen outbreak, and I thought Willow might be getting asthma, like his brother, Ashley and myself."*

When he couldn't drink his bottles because he was struggling to breathe, James drove Willow and Naomi to Menindee Hospital where Naomi describes the tense moments before the Flying Doctor was called.

"Willow was rushed in for assessment, and we were told he needed more help. An ambulance from Broken Hill would take far too long, so an RFDS flight to Broken Hill Hospital was arranged. They carried my baby on and off the plane like he was the most prized possession."

Willow was diagnosed with a Floppy Larynx, where the cartilage in an infant's larynx collapses inward during inhalation. His breathing improved immensely with an oral steroid, and the next day, the family headed straight to Sydney for further treatment.

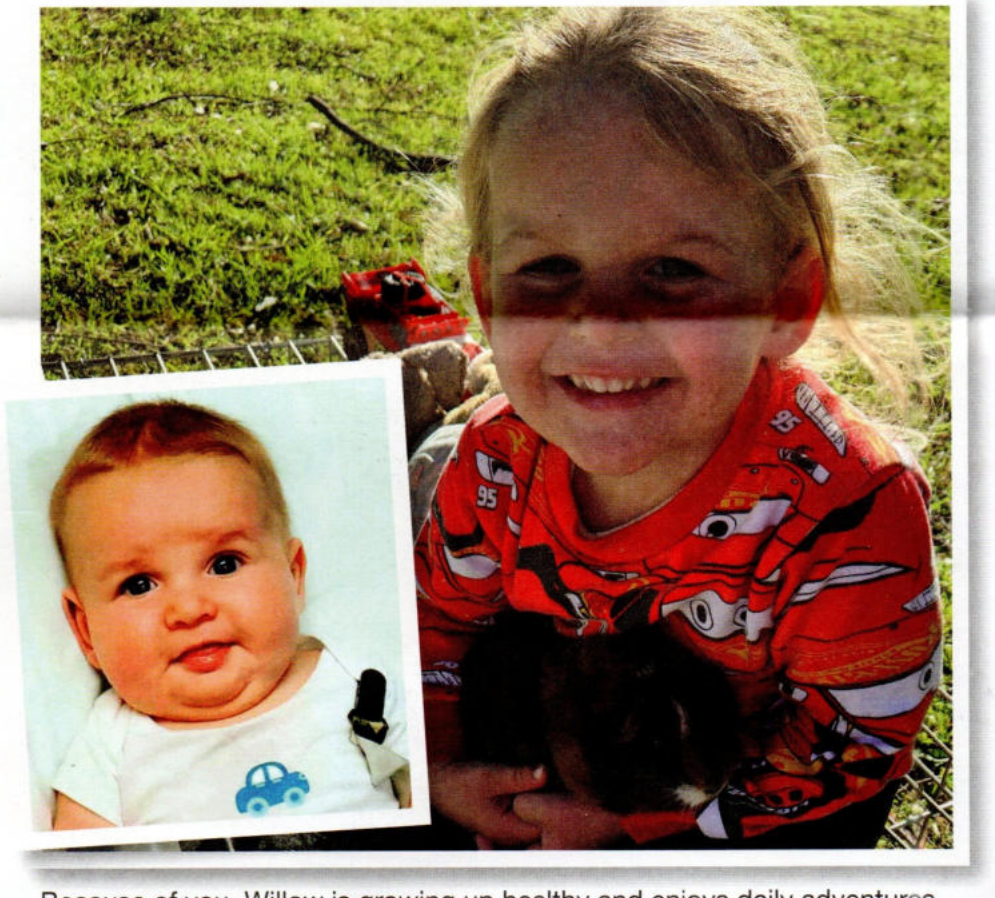
You turned a scary situation into one where Naomi felt comforted that her baby was going to be okay.

"It was like a big warm hug at a stressful time. This is what the Flying Doctor do; help people in sticky situations when help isn't readily available," Naomi said.

Willow has just turned three. His larynx is no longer floppy and there is no sign of asthma. And after an adventure in the Simpson Desert last year, the family is now planning a trip to Cape York.

He is a strong, healthy and adventurous toddler, thanks to you!

Willow's family will be forever grateful to you for the emergency retrieval that helped their little boy. Thank you for caring so much about delivering urgent healthcare to families in the bush.



Because of you, Willow is growing up healthy and enjoys daily adventures with his pet guinea pig, Bubbles.

Ruth believes in the power of making a regular donation, and hopes you will, too

Like you, Ruth knows the value of helping others. She is committed to making a regular donation that will make "such a remarkable difference" to people's lives in outback communities - and she wants to encourage kind people like you to join her in giving regularly.

Ruth first signed up on behalf of her daughters, who wanted to support on a regular basis, but couldn't afford to do so. *"My philosophy is 'give what you can and try and encourage other people to give as well."*

"The Flying Doctor covers so much of the country. So many people need it, and if you can't keep flying, that's a huge loss to communities," she said.

Ruth's husband grew up in the remote town of Collarenebri (Collie for short), which makes up a triangle between Moree, Walgett and Lightning Ridge. It is where his uncle installed specialised airstrips for the Flying Doctor.

"Some of the stations are hundreds of kilometres away, even on my husband's property in Collie... the roads were impossible. It's very hard to get out. So, you had to rely on planes to get in."

Now retired and a keen traveller, staying safe in remote areas is always on Ruth's mind.

"If you want to leave the greater metropolitan area in any state, there's a very real possibility that if you're in trouble, it'll be the RFDS that'll get you the medical help you need and, if necessary, fly you out. When I see the landing strips, I think, we're OK, because there is help."

By giving a regular ongoing donation, you are ensuring we can be agile, prepared and respond to the needs of families in the bush as they change and grow.

We are so thankful to Ruth, her daughters, and committed supporters like you for making sure people who live in the outback always have access to urgent healthcare.

You can join Ruth and transform your support to a regular gift. Scan the QR code to find out more.

Ruth's love of the bush has inspired her to make a regular gift on behalf of her daughters, pictured above on a family trip to Townsville.

Their undefeatable commitment and your persistent kindness

Meet our incredible Emergency Retrieval team whose regular ongoing cutting edge training wouldn't be possible without your support. This training prepares them to go to the furthest corners of Australia at any time of day or night, thanks to you.

Our Emergency Retrieval teams undertake two types of intensive training: induction training, conducted over a six-day period for new recruits and regular training to maintain skills.

"Training takes place twice a year with a new intake of doctors, simulating real-life scenarios that may be encountered," explains Dr. Peter Brendt, Co-Medical Director Emergency & Retrieval.

In a real emergency, every team member must be able to work swiftly and confidently using only the equipment they have on hand. Training days are staged in a simulation centre that includes a hospital room and aircraft.

Exercises are also conducted outdoors using a range of farm equipment, as well as a mass casualty rescue.

These incidents require specialised strategies and coordination amongst various agencies for effective triage, stabilisation and transportation.

Your commitment to providing critical healthcare to families in the bush means our Emergency Retrieval team is *'the best of the best,'* equipped with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to handle any situation.

"The whole team must be prepared for very fast, very methodical procedures. Specialised training equipment, like baby mannequins, and the latest technology in simulators, allows training for all possibilities. Donor support for these training tools is critical to success" says Dr. Brendt.

When an emergency call-out matches the training provided, you can see why your support is so necessary. Your generosity means ongoing investment in the best training and the right equipment to ensure vital patient care.

With you by our side, we can deliver world-class critical healthcare to people in the bush, no matter where they live.

Thank you for looking out for the health of all Australians, near or far.

Critical training in bush environments like the one in Dubbo (above) only happens because of you.

Patric is helping bring healthcare to the bush, just like you

Your kindness not only makes a difference for people in remote communities, but it inspires people like Patric to take action.

After volunteering at the 2024 Mundi Mundi Bash, Patric was touched by the support he witnessed. *"I was struck by the pure generosity of the people, the amazing Flying Doctor staff, and hearing stories from people about how the Flying Doctor helped them,"* he said.

"People from different places across Australia told the same stories; there was a life-changing situation where they really needed help, and RFDS was there. And it wasn't just the usual medical emergencies... it was the clinics, the mental health projects, the wellbeing centres, just generally helping people out in the community. It's just amazing."

Moved by what he'd experienced, and with personal health goals as well, Patric signed up as a family team for the 2024 Oceans to Outback challenge.

Patric was inspired by supporters like you to take on the Oceans to Outback challenge. Here he is in Coogee with his daughters Phoebe and Alexandra and wife Helen in 2024.

Now he's considering taking part again!

And generous people like you are what made his Oceans to Outback experience so wonderful. As Patric says, getting his first donation was a highlight.

"I shared on Facebook and within about 10 minutes, two donations had hit my inbox - wow. It felt really good. And the money goes to do all these amazing things."

It's not too late to sign up for this year's Oceans to Outback challenge! You can join the challenge community and run, walk or cycle at your own pace.

Every kilometre travelled will make a difference for rural, regional and remote communities. Take on the Oceans to Outback challenge and give equal access to healthcare to all Australians – it's free to sign up and you will get a t-shirt as a thank you for fundraising.

Support from generous people like you and Patric helps us continue to deliver critical healthcare in the bush. Join the Oceans to Outback challenge today, and you can make it our biggest year yet!

Sign up today at oceanstooutback.org.au

YOU CAN SAVE LIVES FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Become an **Outback Guardian** and join a community of like-minded and visionary people who are committed to improving the healthcare of people who live, work or travel in outback Australia.

With a special act of generosity in your Will, you are helping us plan ahead with confidence, to provide long-term health services to families in remote, rural and regional communities.

For further information, please scan the QR code or contact our Planned Giving Team

Cristina Caamano
Planned Giving Senior Manager
giftinwills@rfdsse.org.au
0488 280 193

With your help, we are taking healthcare to more people more often. **Thank you!** To contact the Royal Flying Doctor Service (South Eastern Section), call **1300 669 569**, email **supporter@rfdsse.org.au** or visit us at **flyingdoctor.org.au**
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Royal Flying Doctor Service
SOUTH EASTERN SECTION

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MOST REPUTABLE CHARITY
THIRTEEN TIMES